

Dear Senator Mae Flexer (Co-Chair), Representative Dan Fox (Co-Chair), Senator Rob Sampson (Ranking Member), Representative Gale Mastrofrancesco (Ranking Member) and esteemed members of the Government Administration and Elections (GAE) Committee:

My name is Marissa Mead, I am a voter from Hamden. Passing HB 6578, but with needed improvements, is important to me because it increases voter participation.

This is also a widely supported move - 77% of Connecticut voters support Automatic Voter Registration in a recent Secure Democracy public opinion poll. Across the country, nineteen states have versions of AVR.

Restoring the right to vote to people re-entering their communities on parole is also important to me because disenfranchising people on parole sustains a racist system of inequality in our state. Those on parole are concentrated in only a handful of Connecticut communities—those with significant populations of Black and Latino people. Preventing formerly incarcerated people from voting undermines good-faith attempts at reintegration, and artificially decreases the voting power of the communities in which people on parole reside.

Lastly, passing SB 1017 is also absolutely necessary so that voters currently qualifying to vote absentee retain the freedom they had in 2020 to use their town's official, secure ballot drop boxes.

I urge you to pass HB 6578 but with expansion of Automatic Voter Registration beyond the Dept. of Motor Vehicles to other state agencies—and I urge you to pass SB 1017.

Thank you,

Marissa Mead, Hamden, CT